

VZCZCXRO8632  
PP RUEHCI  
DE RUEHKT #0914 1281129  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 081129Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5839  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5695  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6000  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1222  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4023  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5315  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1398  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3440  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000914

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: FAR-LEFT LEADER APPOINTED MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND  
POPULATION

People's Front Gets Health Ministry -- Again  
-----

11. (SBU) On April 29, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala appointed People's Front Nepal (PFN) leader Giriraj Mani Pokharel as Minister for Health and Population. Although the Seven-Party Alliance and the Maoists had agreed that the far-left party would have two representatives in the Interim Cabinet -- including one minister and one state minister -- the PFN, which is split into three factions, initially refused to propose any candidates for the posts. Outgoing Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Amik Sherchan was reportedly angry that the PFN did not retain a deputy premiership in the new government. As a result, for nearly a month, Prime Minister Koirala held the Health portfolio himself.

Comment  
-----

12. (SBU) What difference, if any, the switch in leadership will make for the functioning of the Health Ministry is not yet clear. Sherchan's status as Deputy Prime Minister did not appear to give his ministry any more clout or resources. Pokherel's appointment leaves three positions, all state ministerships, in what is now a 23-person cabinet still unfilled: one each for the Prime Minister's Nepali Congress, the Maoists and the People's Front.

Biographic Information  
-----

13. (SBU) New Minister for Health and Population Giriraj Mani Pokherel is one of the two PFN party vice presidents, but he is not one of the nine PFN MPs in the Interim Parliament established on January 15, 2007. Pokherel was awarded a Master's degree in Commerce in 1982 and a Bachelor's degree in Law in 1985 from Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu. He started his political career in 1980 as a member of the All Nepal National Free Student Union, a student wing of the Communist Party of Nepal. In 1984, he participated in the 14th convention of the Communist Party of Nepal. He was active in the 1990 People's Movement as a Central Committee Member of the United Left Front. Pokharel was born in the Khotang District in 1959, a district in the eastern hills.

His current home district is the Morang District, in the  
eastern Terai.  
HUGINS